

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the subject application in view of the following remarks and the accompanying Declarations.

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-12, 14-16 and 19-21 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 11, and 20 being independent.

Art Rejections

In the Office Action, Claims 1-3, 5, 8, 10-12, 14-16 and 19-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over US Patent No. 7,053,780 (Straub) in view of US Patent No. 6,850,604 (Cannell).

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Straub and Cannell in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,728,522 (Marrah).

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Straub and Cannell in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,710,715 (Deeds).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Straub qualifies as art only under § 102(e) and has an effective date as of its September 30, 2003 filing date. Applicant submits concurrently herewith Declarations under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 ("131 Declaration") of both inventors and the attorney who prepared the application. The 131 Declarations establish conception of the claimed invention at least as early as September 30, 2003, coupled with diligence in the reduction to practice of the claimed subject matter from just before September 30, 2003, the date of the Straub reference, until the filing date of this application. See MPEP 715. Accordingly, Straub does not qualify as prior art against the subject application. The

remaining references Cannell, Marrah, and Deeds lack numerous salient features of the independent claims and are therefore insufficient to maintain a 103(a) rejection.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-3, 5, 8, 10-12, 14-16 and 19-21 are believed to be allowable over the cited documents.

CONCLUSION

Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejections, and a notice of allowance.

If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, **the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.**

Respectfully submitted,

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